

My Name is Sarah

“It was my first pregnancy. My mother, who is a Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA), decided to help me deliver my baby at home. She sent for another TBA in the village to come and assist her. For two days, I could not deliver. In the process, my mother and her friend forced me to deliver by several ways. At one point, my mother’s friend asked me to confess (insinuating that the baby was delayed in coming out because I had had many sexual partners during the pregnancy). I grew so tired of their torture until I had to lie and say I was in a sexual relationship with her husband. That was when they decided to give up on me and referred me to the nearby clinic.

Before arriving at the nearby health center, the baby was already halfway out. I was at the health center for another day and a half with no end to my suffering. I was transferred to another hospital, where I received a cesarean section to deliver my baby. At that point the baby was already dead.

I spent about two weeks at the hospital. I noticed that I was wetting the bed.

Following my discharge, I returned to the village with paralyzed lower limbs. After eight months in the village, I learned that the condition I was suffering from is called fistula and help was available.

I was successfully treated by the Liberia Fistula Program, which also provided me with the opportunity to turn my life around. I took that opportunity to learn soap-making, cosmetology, hair plaiting and embroidery.

I am now free from fistula and empowered to earn my own money.”